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THE OUTLOOK IN ITALY.

The condition of affairs in Italy, both politically and financially, seems gloomy indeed, if we may trust the reports which come to us from various sources. There are two causes for the deplorable state into which the country has fallen. The first is the burden of military taxation made necessary in order to meet the demands imposed by the Triple Alliance. In a brochure recently prepared by an eminent Italian economist, the Marquis Vilfredo Pareto, and published by the Lombard Peace Union at Milan, it is stated that the expenses for the military have doubled since 1875. At that time the annual outlay was 216 millions of francs. At present the amount is 422 millions. The defenders of the augmentation of the army and navy plead that they are only following the example of France in expending such large sums. But France, says Pareto, has four times the wealth of Italy, while her military burdens are only twice as great. It seems that there is no escape from the ruinous increase of taxes so long as the present policy of the administration is followed.

Signor Frescot, a distinguished member of the Turin bar, recently said :

" It distresses me to express to you my opinion of the Giolitti ministry. Its composition has thrown numerous patriots into consternation. The men of the new cabinet inspire us with nothing but distrust. The party of the court alone can manifest any satisfaction over it, for it is very evident that militarism and hatred of France constitute the basis of the government's program. The nation, I mean the laboring classes, is paying enormous taxes and opposing only apathy to the policy of extravagant armaments. My heart nearly ceases to beat when I notice that the greater part of our deputies, moved by selfish feelings, are pursuing a chimerical purpose, and putting off all hope of an early reestablishment of amicable relations with France. I have no doubt that the ranks of the opposition are going to increase. The cabinet will discover this on the day when it finds itself compelled, at all hazards, to have recourse to new taxes. Until that day it will live by financial expedients, perhaps by ruinous loans. But that is a dangerous game. When the necessity of meeting debts contracted shall arise unexpectedly, it is to be feared that very rash proceedings will take place.

" If Signor Giolitti does not succeed in checking this frenzy for armaments, the principal cause of our financial distress, the necessity will come of imposing new taxes on real estate, already so heavily burdened. One must have the courage to say openly that our country is rushing headlong into economic ruin. To prevent the disaster, the new cabinet will multiply expedients, in order to retard the claims of such exorbitant burdens. It is caught, however, in the machinery and will strive to finish the deadly work of its predecessors."

Signor Frescot's words let us into the very heart of Italy's trouble. What he says of his own country is true virtually of every great power in Europe. The following extract from a letter recently received at this

office, the name of the writer of which is withheld, will make clear the other cause of Italy's ruinous policy :

" If there ever was a time which called for the proclamation in Europe of the claims of peace, in face of the oppressive and terrible rage of deceived hopes and ambitions, it is the present moment. Would that we had a thousand trumpets with which to arouse at last the attention of peoples, to master the most recalcitrant, and to create a serious obstacle to enterprises projected by lust, hatred and envy. Oh! that we had money, that we might go, run, speak, and create organs in behalf of peace and the real interests of the nations! What are we doing in face of the formidable power which we are combating? in face of the diabolical means which it employs and the force which it exerts on the human spirit through the accumulation of ages? When one thinks of it, he is compelled to confess that the overthrow of this power must be the work of God and not that of man. The electric state of war surrounds us on every side. The Italian dynasty does not know how to extricate itself from the 'blind alley' in which it has become involved. This dynasty is sacrificing a great people to its lusts, its ambitions, its terror, and to its hatred of the principle of republicanism.

" When I was at Rome, I had an interview with the proprietor of one of the leading monarchist papers of the peninsula. After having discussed the principal grievances which Italy is supposed to have against us; after having admitted that certain political movements of France may justly be open to criticism; after having agreed that the relative evil done might be repaired by lessening the strain in the relations of the two countries, by concessions which time and the appeasement of spirit would bring; 'No,' said my interlocutor, 'believe me, Italy has not several grievances against you. There are none which are really serious, capable of bringing a rupture between the two peoples. There is only one, do you understand? only a single one. All the rest are pretexts.' And when, after having repeated that two or three times, he did not finish, 'Well,' I said to him, 'what is this grievance?' 'You are a republic,' he replied. 'Destroy the republic and all the grievances of Italy will fall away. Her gates will be open to you and her friendship secure.'

" It is, then, at the present hour, simply a question of dynasty: a fixed idea, a decided resolution to sacrifice an entire people to the interest of a crown, if the interest of that crown really demands it. Perhaps there is a dream, that of ancient Rome, of intoxicating a people with the sentiment of a restored glory and with the view of a triumph and of rich spoils brought to the capitol.

" I answered my journalist that we were not yet ready to sacrifice our Republic to reassure or to gratify the house of Savoy; that the form of government in Italy, whether monarchical or republican, did not concern us; that we had no disposition to interfere in the affairs of others and that we should never do so again. 'I know it well,' he said. 'But what ever you may do, nothing will change.' And he was right, nothing is changing. On the contrary, everything seems to be deepening in intensity, to perpetuate the threatening aspect of things."

The writer of the letter concludes: "What I say is this: 'Let us pray for help, for the hour is perhaps near; and let us act by all the means which God gives

us, for the time is urgent and the atmosphere is becoming charged more and more with the heavy and dreadful electricity of storms.'"

The outlook for Italy and for Europe would be disheartening in the extreme, if the picture given here were all. There is something else to be said, which must go over to another time.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The *British Friend* raised the question in February last, whether in the Alabama award the United States did not receive much more than could be justly claimed for the damage done to our commerce during the war by ships fitted out in England. Investigation at the Treasury Department at Washington shows that no claims have been paid except such as have been allowed by the Court of Claims. The fifteen and a half millions awarded the United States at Geneva, not having been found sufficient, has been divided proportionally among the claimants. Senator Frye says that the sum allowed the United States did not cover one-tenth of the losses inflicted on our commerce.

It is an interesting bit of history in connection with this Alabama affair, that England was so certain at the time that she had done us no wrong and owed us no reparation, that her representative at Geneva voted to the last to allow us nothing in the way of damages. But England honorably bowed to the decision of the tribunal, and the verdict of history is that she never did an act worthier of her greatness. Would the United States imitate her example, if in the Behring Sea case now pending, the decision should be against her? We certainly think so, but with what "weeping and gnashing of teeth" we are unable to say.

The editor of the *Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon, grows intensely and eloquently patriotic at sight of the warships, Baltimore and Charleston, which on the 14th of May steamed up the Willamette river and came to anchor before the city. He says:

"The sight of the majestic warships, Baltimore and Charleston, as they steamed slowly up the river, passed through the draw of the steel bridge and cast anchor abreast the city yesterday morning, was a most inspiring one. It is difficult to believe that there was among the thousands who lined the wharves, crowded the bridges, and thronged the high banks of the river on the East Side to watch the coming into port of these vessels, one American citizen who did not feel a thrill of pride and a sense of personal ownership in these staunch representatives of the new navy of the United States. The argument of the Universal Peace Society and the familiar plea

of narrow economy in connection with naval construction alike go down before these splendid specimens of the nation's power upon the seas and give a feeling of security that the bare hands of Christian endeavor and the spirit of Christian forbearance are powerless to bestow. While it may with true humanity be hoped that the guns of these cruisers will never be called upon to carry a message of defiance and death to an enemy of the republic, the fact that they would be able to do so effectively, if necessary, is one that carries with it a feeling of patriotic exultation. Against the possibility that the nation may never need the services of men-of-war in active encounter with a foe, is the fact that the possession of such vessels as these reduces this possibility to the minimum."

If the ships which the editor was watching had been two of England's stoutest battle-ships, halting over against the city to bombard it, and he had been compelled to see his beautiful city in flames, his fellow-townsmen torn into fragments, and all the business interests of the place for the time ruined, he would doubtless have thought the English a very wicked and cruel people. Did it ever strike the patriotic spirit of the editor that patriotism in one country is just as meritorious as it is in another, and that when a nation decides to submit a difference between itself and another to the arbitrament of the rifle and the mortar that it thereby makes it just as proper and right for its enemy to kill and mangle and burn as it is for it to do so itself? You can not justly complain if men treat you in the same way that you are treating them.

The "hands of Christian endeavor and the spirit of Christian forbearance," which seem to the *Oregonian* so weak alongside of these deadly warships, have done more to give a "feeling of security" in all civilized lands than all the warships that ever furrowed the seas. The men who feel the securest in any part of the world, and who are so in fact, are the men who, from principle, go unarmed, and the time will come when the nations will learn the same simple, practical lesson.

The English Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who has in his time said and done some not very commendable things, gave expression in a speech the other day to some sentences which everybody ought to hear:

"After all, the great triumph of civilization in the past has been the substitution of judicial arbitration for the cold, cruel, crude arbitrament of war. We have got rid of private war between small magnate and small magnate. In this country we have got rid of the duel between man and man; we are slowly, as far as we can, substituting arbitration for struggle in international disputes. Can you doubt that the great interests of labor will follow the same road which civilization has hitherto pursued, and that we shall in the end, by the action of public opinion, by the pressure of moral obligation in those who are concerned—that we shall learn to find, in the decisions of some arbitrating and mediating power, a result which